

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 88

Claim 1 stands rejected as anticipated by Chislenko (US Pat. 6,041,311). The office action appears to rely on Chislenko as teaching an approach in which "information stored in user profiles is used to calculate a set of similarity factors ... between a user and other users." (col. 2, lines 20-22). For a particular user, neighboring users are selected based on the similarity factors. "Items are recommended [to the particular user] if the user's neighboring users have also rated the item highly." (col. 9, lines 27-30).

Claim 1 as amended recites

"computing parameters associated with the one or more groups using the user-related data, including for each of the one or more groups of users computing parameters characterizing predicted ratings of items by non-specific users in the group."

Apparently, the examiner is associating the recited "one or more groups of users" with the sets of neighboring users for various particular users, and the "parameters associated with" sets of neighboring users as the similarities between users in the sets.

However, the similarities between users do not "characterize[e] predicted ratings of items by non-specific users in the group" as required by the claim. The similarities between the users may characterize relationships between users, but they do not characterize predicted ratings by non-specific users in a set of neighboring users as the examiner suggest.

Chislenko's uses a relatively conventional user-based collaborative filtering approach, which begins with a specific user -- the user that defines a neighborhood of that specific user: "A plurality of users that are closely correlated to a particular users are selected as that user's neighboring users. ..." (col. 2, lines 23-24). Different users in the particular user's neighborhood may have different weights, and the profiles and weights of the neighboring users are used to recommend an item to the particular user:

Once weights are assigned to neighboring users, an item is recommended to a user. ... In one embodiment, a rating is

predicted for each item that has not yet been rated by the user. This predicted rating can be arrived at by taking a weighted average of the ratings given to those items by the user's neighboring users. (col. 9, lines 28-29 and 42-46, emphasis added).

If for the sake of argument we accept that the recited "group" is a neighborhood of a particular user, it is clear that the only procedure associated with generation of recommendations using that group is for the particular user that defines the neighborhood, and not a non-specific user in the particular user's neighborhood as would be required by the claim. Chislenko does not disclose any approach to characterizing predicted ratings of non-specific users of any group, and more particularly does not disclose or suggest "computing parameters characterizing predicted ratings of items by non-specific users in the group." The similarities between users are used in recommending items to a specific user and are not used in recommending items to a non-specific user in a group.

The office action also asserts that Chislenko "disclose[s] predicting ratings based on parameters associated with the group and the user." (p. 4). The office action also refers to "clustering factors" for a group of users. However, Chislenko does not disclose any clustering of users or any formation of groups of users other than identification of neighboring users to a particular user.

Claim 88 is allowable for at least the reasons set forth above for claim 1.

New dependent claims 90-91

New dependent claims 90-91 have been added. Claim 90 requires parameters associated with multiple groups are using the user-related data and that these computed parameters are stored for each group in association with an identification of the associated group. Even if the office action's positions are accepted for the sake of argument, Chislenko fails to disclose or suggest storing parameters characterizing predicted ratings of items by non-specific users in each of multiple groups in association with identifiers of those groups.

The fact that the Applicant has not addressed all the reasons put forth in the Office Action in the rejection of the claims does not mean that the Applicant agrees with those reasons. The reasons set forth above are sufficient to address the rejections of all the claims. There may be other reasons for the allowability of these or other claims.

Please apply the \$50.00 for excess claim fees and the \$60.00 fee for the Petition for Extension of Time fee and any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050, referencing Attorney Docket No. 14173-002001.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: _____

Feb. 5, 2007

J. Robin Rohlicek

J. Robin Rohlicek, J.D., Ph.D.
Reg. No. 43,349

Fish & Richardson P.C.
225 Franklin Street
Boston, MA 02110
Telephone: (617) 542-5070
Facsimile: (617) 542-8906